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ACTION: Amembassy, SAIGON - EMERGENCY 269

Info:

EYES ONLY FOR THE AMBASSADOR FROM THE PRESIDENT

You are getting separately a longer message (Deptel 268) which reflects interdepartmental meeting with me this morning. In this personal message I want to emphasize again that I wish to have your independent judgment and also that of General Harkins at every stage. The basic policies set forth in DEPTELs 243 and 256 represent my best current judgment, but this judgment in turn is heavily dependent on your on-the-spot advice, and I trust you will not hesitate to recommend delay or change in plans if at any time you think it wise.

Messages from Harkins to Joint Chiefs give some impression of uncertainty on his part as to presently planned timing of action by Generals, so I am asking through General Taylor for a direct message from Harkins to me as Commander-in-Chief, giving his personal assessment of the total situation and his best advice as to present and future courses. You will

Drafted by: Text Received from the White House

Telegraphic transmission and classification approved by: JAMcKesson - SS

Clearances:
The Secretary
FE-RHilsman

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get a copy of Taylor's message, and you should explain to Harkins that I have high confidence in his judgment. While naturally there are differences of emphasis among the many officials concerned here in Washington, Washington will act as a unit under my direction, and that unit has respect for what Harkins has accomplished and for his candid judgment at every stage.

In all this, I continue to think of you as my personal representative and repose greatest confidence in you.

GP-1

END

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